



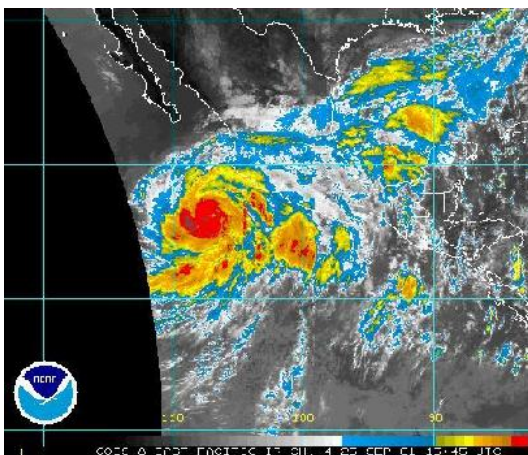
## Week 8

Sampling during our last week here was once again eventful. Early in the week, we deployed our second thermal tag, and ended up tracking it for three days through very rough weather caused by hurricane Juliette to our north. On Day 3, the weather finally improved sufficiently to recapture the thermal-tag dolphin and three of its roto-tagged buddies.

This was the only time during our

entire study that a group of tagged dolphins had stayed together for three days. Additional blood samples from these animals would be very valuable, if we could catch them again. So we removed the thermal tag (with over 72 hours of continuous data on heat flux, skin temperature, water temperature, depth, velocity, and light!) and tagged a new animal in the group, in hopes of recapturing this little gang one more time the following day.

The next day, which was our last day in the study area, we quickly located our new focal dolphin. Unfortunately, the tagged animal was only with one other smaller dolphin. The roto-tagged dolphins were nowhere to be seen. So we planned to just recapture these two animals, remove the radio tag, obtain a blood sample, and then be on our way home. The weather was cooperative and we captured the pair within the hour. The two animals were swimming normally inside the net compass when then the net began to collapse, and they suddenly disappeared. The swimmers in the water quickly searched to see if they had become entangled, but the dolphins could not be found. As we feared, the tagged dolphin later came up in the net as it was retrieved. The dolphin had become entangled at one end of the net under the tunaboat, where the swimmers could not see it or get to it. The smaller dolphin was not seen again, and we believe it must have escaped through a small net opening.



After retrieving the net and recovering our sampling team, we transferred equipment back from the seiner and said good-bye to the seiner's crew. Then our two ships turned and headed off towards our respective home ports. We will miss our friends aboard the seiner -- they are a terrific crew, and our success in getting these difficult-to-obtain samples during the last two months is largely due to their incredible skill and dedication. So now we are on our way home, hoping hurricane Juliette moves out of our path quickly as she heads northwest. We are several hundred miles from home, but the seas are reasonable so far...